



# Volunteers support local programs

May 2, 2018

To mark April as National Volunteer Month, the Laboratory coordinated three volunteer opportunities for employees to make a difference in Northern New Mexico. Forty-seven employees gave up their free time to support injured wildlife, improve the landscape, and help homeowners with necessary home repairs.

The mission of the nonprofit Mesa to Mesa (formerly Somos Amigos) is to improve the health, safety and security of low-income homeowners in Northern New Mexico by performing minor repairs to their homes. On April 6, Lab volunteers joined the organization's construction supervisor to conduct repairs for a homeowner in the Española area. Part of the project was to build a new set of steps to the door of the home.

"Construction volunteer work has always been extremely satisfying to me," says Jackie Mettler, who helped Mesa to Mesa on the day. "It's hard work but you feel so accomplished at the end of the day knowing that, as a group, you were able to improve a family's quality of life."

"What I enjoyed most was meeting the mother of the house we worked on. She came out to help at the end of the day and we talked about her kids and joked around. It was a great feeling to see how happy us being there made her feel. I'm glad to know that her little ones now have a safer place to grow up!"

*Volunteers*

*helping on the Mesa to Mesa project.*

On April 13, volunteers helped rebuild resident bird enclosures at the New Mexico Wildlife Center in Española. The Center works to conserve and restore native wildlife and its habitats.

"When the Center dedicated to safeguard and rehabilitate native wildlife and their environments asks for help, and you have your Friday off, I think the only reasonable thing to do is to get involved," says Lab volunteer Abdou Diaw.

"I enjoyed the interactions with the Wildlife center members and my colleagues. Most of them had more experience in building homes/habitats than I do, so I learned a lot from them. Also, I finally got to see a roadrunner in real life!"

The last volunteer day on April 22 saw Lab employees help remove invasive species and improve the trails at the Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC) in Los Alamos. PEEC aims to enrich people's lives by "strengthening their connections to our canyons, mesas, mountains, and skies" and serves 40,000 people a year.

"Lab employees are generous with their time, talent and money. Volunteering to help other people and organizations in our community is just one of the ways we look to make a difference in Northern New Mexico," says Joanna Gillespie, from the Laboratory's Community Partnerships Office, who coordinated the volunteer opportunities.

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